2007

Collaborative teaching: how can co-teaching be implemented effectively in the classroom?

Elizabeth Lea Kelly
University of Northern Iowa

Copyright ©2007 Elizabeth Lea Kelly
Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp
Part of the Curriculum and Instruction Commons, and the Educational Methods Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Recommended Citation
Kelly, Elizabeth Lea, "Collaborative teaching: how can co-teaching be implemented effectively in the classroom?" (2007). Graduate Research Papers. 976.
https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/976

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.
Collaborative teaching: how can co-teaching be implemented effectively in the classroom?

Abstract
A huge issue in education today is that of inclusion. There is a wide spectrum of beliefs on whether or not all students should be fully included in the general classroom. According to K.S. Stout (2001) in *Special Education Inclusion*, a solution to this major issue is collaborative or co-teaching. With a push for least restrictive environment, collaborative teaching has become a very important part of the education system. The big question is: How can teachers implement co-teaching into their instruction effectively?
COLLABORATIVE TEACHING:
HOW CAN CO-TEACHING BE IMPLEMENTED EFFECTIVELY
IN THE CLASSROOM?

A Graduate Review
Submitted to the
Division of Elementary Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Elizabeth Lea Kelly
August, 2007
This review by: Elizabeth Lea Kelly

Titled: Collaborative Teaching: How Can Co-teaching Be Implemented Effectively in the Classroom?

has been approved as meeting the research requirements for the Master of Arts in Education.

Lynn E. Nielsen

Date Approved: August 16, 2007
Graduate Faculty Reader

Timoth G. Weih

Date Approved: 8/16/07
Graduate Faculty Reader

Mary C. Herring

Date Approved: 8/23/07
Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Table of Contents

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................... 5
   a. What is Inclusion ........................................................................................... 5
   b. Including Students With Special Needs in Your Classroom ......................... 6

2. Methodology ................................................................................................................. 8

3. Literature Review .......................................................................................................... 8
   a. Implementing Co-Teaching into Instruction .................................................. 8
   b. Setting up the Collaborative Classroom ........................................................ 14
   c. Co-Teaching Relationships ............................................................................ 16
   d. The Collaborative Teaching Classroom ........................................................ 20
   e. Finding Time to Collaborate .......................................................................... 21
   f. Issues Related to Co-Teaching ....................................................................... 22
   g. Current Research ............................................................................................ 22

4. Conclusions and Recommendations ............................................................................. 25

5. References ..................................................................................................................... 27

6. Appendix A ................................................................................................................... 29

7. Appendix B ................................................................................................................... 31
Abstract

A huge issue in education today is that of inclusion. There is a wide spectrum of beliefs on whether or not all students should be fully included in the general classroom. According to K.S. Stout (2001) in *Special Education Inclusion*, a solution to this major issue is collaborative or co-teaching. With a push for least restrictive environment, collaborative teaching has become a very important part of the education system. The big question is: How can teachers implement co-teaching into their instruction effectively?
Introduction

In order to implement inclusion into our schools, the entire school system needs to be restructured. Transitions need to be based on research and the reflections of the members involved. Services need to be provided for all, including the students and the faculty implementing the transition. The students’ first placement needs to be in the regular education setting with well-developed IEPs and goals that meet the students’ social, emotional, and academic needs. In order to do this, a well developed program must be established to provide several learning and teaching approaches. This program is collaborative or co-teaching.

In this review, the following questions are explored about collaborative teaching:

1. How can teachers implement co-teaching into their instruction?
2. How do teachers set up a collaborative classroom?
3. What does co-teacher relationships consist of?
4. What does a collaborative teaching classroom look like?
5. How do teachers find time to collaborate?
6. What issues can hurt the process of co-teaching?

What is inclusion?

To understand co-teaching teachers first need to understand inclusion. According to Stout (2001):

Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the series) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students). Proponents of inclusion generally favor newer forms of education service delivery. (p. 1)
Full inclusion "means that all students, regardless of handicapping condition of severity, will be in a regular classroom / program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting" (Stout, 2001, p. 1).

Even though the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Section 504 Plan do not force inclusion, they recommend placement in the regular education classroom or the least restrictive environment. According to Stout (2001), the entire school program needs to be restructured to implement inclusion. The school system must be flexible, provide additional support and professional development, get everyone involved, and accept different outcomes. Any transition should be based on research and reflections, and the services should be provided for all. A progressive room with inclusion should have specially educated teachers and special funding. Regular and special education can be very different, so making the transition towards inclusion needs to be done carefully and needs to take a lot adequate time in creating an effective plan. Stout (2001) continued that a more inclusive environment is one that supports and provides services for all. The students' first placement should be in the regular education setting with well-developed IEPs and goals that meet the students' social, emotional, and academic needs. According to Thomas Lombardi (1994) in Responsible Inclusion of Students with Disabilities, inclusion provides benefits for students with disabilities.

Including Students With Special Needs in Your Classroom

According to M. Kelly (2006), the author of The Co-Teach Model, co-teaching is the way to fulfill the requirements of the inclusion model. Co-teaching supports the IDEA and Section 504 Plan. It is a well-developed approach that was established to provide several learning and teaching approaches.
Although there can be different models of co-teaching, the article, *Co-teaching* (2006) through Twins Publications, believed co-teaching is an educational approach where the special education and regular education teachers communicate, plan, and teach lessons together that are appropriate for all students. It has been developed to increase inclusion in our schools in order to create a diverse academic classroom for all students.

According to Lynne Cook and Marilyn Friend (1995) in *Co-teaching Guidelines for Creating Effective Practices*, co-teaching is when “two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended group of students in a single physical space” (p. 1). Based on Cook and Friend (1995), the rationale for co-teaching is (a) increase instructional options, (b) improve program, (c) reduce stigma, and (d) increase support for teachers and specialists. Marilyn Friend (2000) added in Myths and Misunderstandings About Professional Collaboration, that co-teaching requires time and effort and is about respect. Educators must be informed of what collaborative teaching is and how to use it to provide services to the students.

According to Marilyn Friend (2000), professional collaboration has been used as a strategy since the early 1900's. This approach began to include the collaboration of special and regular education in the 1960's. They used this approach to share responsibility and teach separately. Eventually it moved more towards teaching together because of the increase in expectations for students with special needs being taught in the general classrooms. Today, “collaboration is fast becoming one of the most popular service delivery models,” according to Peggy T. Reeve and Daniel P. Hallahan in Millicent Lawton’s *Co-teaching: Are Two Heads Better Than One in an Inclusion Classroom?* (Lawton, 1999, p. 1).
Methodology

Because of my large desire to answer the question "How can you implement co-teaching into your instruction?,” I chose to research the area of collaborative teaching. In order to do this, I used resources through the Rod Library website (http://www.library.uni.edu). I was able to search through the ERIC (EBSCO) and PsychINFO databases to search for articles and through journals. I used the following search terms: collaborative teaching, co-teaching, and elementary classrooms. I further refined my search with the following keywords: teacher collaboration, regular and special education relationships, peer-reviewed, and elementary education. After I found a collection of resources that were peer-reviewed and credible, I used their reference lists to find new articles to search.

Literature Review

Implementing Co-Teaching into Instruction

According to a study done by Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, and McDuffie (2005) in Case Studies in Co-teaching in the Content Areas: Successes, Failures, and Challenges, the goals of collaborative teaching are: (a) increase access to options, (b) enhance participation, and (c) increase performance for students with disabilities. In Educational Leadership for Teacher Collaboration, Lynn Cook and Marilyn Friend (1993) stated that when implementing the collaborative teaching approach, it is important that the administrators provide a strong sense of leadership. They need to use a system in planning the steps they take for implementation. These steps should include determining goals, planning and preparing for the implementation, implementing the approach, and then maintaining it. Administrators should introduce

In *Myths and Misunderstandings About Professional Collaboration*, Marilyn Friend (2000) believed that using the word "collaboration" does not mean you are collaborating. There is a push for collaboration or "sharedness" and educators tend to overuse the term. "Collaboration requires commitment of the part of each individual to a shared goal, demands careful attention to communicate skills, and obliges participants to maintain parity throughout their interactions" (Friend, 2000, p. 2). Friend believed collaboration is a necessity.

According to a study in the journal *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Natalie Marston, an elementary special education teacher, states that, “Co-teaching can be a wonderful experience when planning and communication are in place beginning day one” (Marston, 2006, p. 1). In her article, *Six Steps to Successful Co-teaching*, Marston supplies the journal with six steps that she believes are essential to co-teaching:

1. establish rapport
2. identify teaching styles
3. discuss strengths and weaknesses
4. discuss Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
5. form a plan of action
6. take risks and grow

The first step is to establish rapport. The regular education and special education teacher need to form a relationship at a personal level. This needs to begin before school
starts, so the educators can learn about each others’ interests, backgrounds, and families. This helps make the students feel comfortable and it models strong communication skills for the students. If there is tension in the classroom between teachers, the students can sense it and begin to feel uncomfortable. This can decrease the students’ level of motivation.

In Making Differences Ordinary Through Co-teaching (2003), Kathy Checkley agreed that the starting point is building a relationship. She says that co-teaching is like "an arranged marriage." Both educators blend their "personalities, philosophies, and professional strengths" (Checkley, 2003, p. 1).

The second step is to identify teaching styles. Everyone teaches differently. Teachers have their own style of how they introduce and instruct and assess students. Before the school year begins, the regular education teacher and special education teacher also need to come to an agreement of how these styles should be addressed. Marston (2006) advised teachers to ask questions like: Are you a hands-on teacher? How do you feel about experiments? How do you manage behaviors? How do you discipline students? Do you teach directly from the text?

These are some of the questions that need to be asked in order to find a balance where both teachers can plan the lessons together using different styles that compliment each other. This will help form a strong basis for instruction by using more defined lessons. It will also help to create consistent expectations that are high, but manageable. This is another important factor for keeping a comfortable classroom climate. Checkley (2003) added that collaborative teaching also provides students with "a continuum of learning experiences."
The third step is to discuss of strengths and weaknesses. Along with the different teaching styles, teachers have their own strengths and weaknesses. Co-educators should make a list of these characteristics and compare them, while highlighting the more dominant strengths. This will help them decide which teacher will lead in certain areas of the curriculum. This allows time for more individualized instruction to meet the wide variety of needs in a larger group.

According to Vance Austin (2001) in *Teachers’ Beliefs about Co-teaching*, most teachers agree that they do not share as many responsibilities, but it is important to agree on individually maintaining certain areas.

The fourth step is to discuss of individualized education plans (IEPs). When looking at the students, the teachers need to discuss the goals and work together to meet them. It is very important that both understand the students’ needs and how to educate them. Each teacher is responsible for all of the students. This includes the special education students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). As a team, they will discuss the IEPs’ modifications, accommodations, goals, and objectives. At the same time, they will also discuss mandatory curriculum for all and the regular education students’ goals and objectives.

Checkley (2003) stated that both educators need to agree and plan for the modifications of assessments and tasks. Both educators also need to help each other in meeting the needs of all students.

The fifth step is to form a plan of action. Together the teachers need to form a plan of action. This should consist of such issues as: scheduling, behavior tolerance, classroom procedures, student consequences, grading, and consistent communication
between guardians and school, and responding to other situations. Both educators need to agree and enforce the guidelines of the action plan. Roles should also be determined over who will handle particular situations. According to Austin (2001) co-teachers should meet daily.

Checkley (2003, p. 1) agreed that both educators must "collaborate to determine their roles...areas of expertise and knowledge." Checkley (2003) then added that they must determine forms of assessment on top of the learning goals. Since the special and regular education settings are not similar, Co-teaching (2006) provided a list of what each educator should specialize in. With these things combined, teachers will be able to help meet the needs of all the students including the students with special needs. Co-teaching added that this increases the skills of not only the students, but also the educators.

Regular Education Teacher Roles:

1. content area
2. scope and sequence of curriculum
3. knowledge of curriculum standards
4. management strategies for large groups
5. objective view of academic and social development
6. pacing

Special Education Teacher Roles:

1. learning styles
2. behavior modifications
3. learning strategies
4. diagnostic / prescriptive teaching
5. educational accommodations
6. identifying learning needs of students

(Co-teaching, 2006, p. 1)

The sixth step is to take risks and grow. The big part of co-teaching is taking risks and growing from them. Marston (2006, p. 2) stated that, “A wonderful aspect of co-teaching is that it allows you to take risks, learn from each other, and grow as professionals.” Regular and special education teachers can use this time to collaborate and learn new strategies. They can also work as each other’s “safety net” by helping each other redirect lessons and point out difficulties.

Checkley (2003, p. 2) added that this "expands both teachers' repertoires." The special education teacher gets to know more students and study the content. The regular education teacher learns to make adaptations to meet different needs. According to Checkley (2003), Penelope Wald and Wendy Boehm, a co-teacher needs self-confidence, to be flexible, believe all children can learn, have high expectations, discuss own knowledge, don't be too serious, and work through difficulties.

Regular Education Teacher Expectations:

1. make adaptations
2. understand special education teacher has other responsibilities
3. share ownership
4. take active role in IEP
5. consistent schedule and notify of changes

Special Education Teacher Expectations:

1. day to day chores
2. grade student work
3. parent-teacher conferences
4. accept responsibility
5. active teaching
6. have adapted work for students with special needs

(Checkley, 2003, p. 1)

Based on the overall findings of six case studies done by Mastropieri (2005), the critical factor for collaborative teaching is the relationship between both teachers. They need to have mutual trust, respect for individual expertise, support for professionalism, have compatible perspectives, and plan for co-teaching, behavior management, and student interactions. It is important for collaborative teachers to know how to clarify and be enthusiastic when engaging or motivating students.

Setting up the Collaborative Classroom


The Cornerstone is a philosophical basis where the co-teachers share beliefs that are common to each other. This helps create a similar philosophy that will help guide them through the co-teaching process.

The individual prerequisite is what each teacher voluntarily brings to the program such as their personal characteristics, common knowledge or discipline specific knowledge, and skills.
The professional relationship is unique. Co-teachers should build their relationship on communication, trust, and respect for one another. They make a commitment to maintain this relationship.

The classroom dynamics is the instructional interactions between the two teachers. How do they define classroom roles? How will they maintain the flow in the instruction? How will they address developmental, academic, and life skills? How will they monitor efforts? The external supports include the support from such sources as the administrators and professional development activities.

According to Friend (2006), when setting up a collaborative teaching classroom, co-teachers should discuss:

1. instructional expectations and formatting
2. planning space / noise
3. instructional and organizational routines
4. the definition of “help”
5. discipline procedures
6. safety matters
7. feedback
8. student evaluation procedures
9. chores / responsibilities
10. confidentiality
11. pet peeves

Most importantly, it is a key factor to implement co-teaching on a small scale, and then gradually increase the workload. Experienced teachers can co-teach in four to six
classrooms successfully in one school day, but this may be overwhelming for those just beginning the co-teaching experience. It is better for the new co-teacher to start off in only a few classrooms and then add on as the approach becomes more comfortable.

Co-Teaching Relationships

Now that there is a better understanding of Marston's six steps towards co-teaching, the focus is on what co-teaching relationships the teachers experience. In Understanding Co-teaching Components, Susan E. Gately and Frank J. Gately Jr. (2001) gave eight components of the co-teaching relationship:

1. interpersonal communication
2. physical arrangement
3. familiarity with the curriculum
4. curriculum goals and modifications
5. construct planning
6. instruction presentation
7. classroom management
8. assessment

While taking the essential steps of co-teaching, educators tend to experience three stages of the co-teaching process within each component:

1. beginning
2. compromising
3. collaborating

The first component Interpersonal Communication. This includes verbal, nonverbal, and social skills. In this component the co-teachers develop respect for each
other. They learn and understand each others' communication styles, and learn how to provide humor to the classroom. In the beginning stage, both teachers are more guarded and careful about what they say or do. In the compromising stage, they start a more "give and take" communication. In the collaborating stage, both teachers become more open in communication and interact with each other more frequently.

The second component is Physical Arrangement. This includes arranging the classroom, materials, students, and teachers. In the beginning stage, both teachers tend to be more separated from each other. In the compromising stage, you see more movement between the teachers and they begin to share space. In the collaborating stage, you see the classroom as a whole-group.

The third component is Familiarity with the Curriculum. This includes being competent and confident in the curriculum and its scope and sequence. In the beginning stage, the special education teacher tends to be more unfamiliar with the curriculum. In the compromising stage, the special education teacher begins to become more comfortable with the curriculum and it able to suggest accommodations to go along with the tasks. In the collaborating stage, both teachers share in the planning and teaching of the curriculum.

The fourth component is Curriculum Goals and Modifications. This includes the planning of specific goals and objectives. In the beginning stage, the goals and objectives tend to be more text driven. In the compromising stage, the teachers start to add modifications and accommodations toward the goal areas. This is a big part for the special education teacher. In the collaborating stage, the teachers are able to differentiate between the different concepts.
The fifth component is Construct Planning. This includes being able to plan lessons on the spot, day to day, week to week, and unit to unit. In the beginning stage, both teachers tend to have a separate curriculum. The special education teacher feels more like an assistant to the regular education teacher. In the compromising stage, they begin to share more planning. In the collaborating stage, the teachers have mutual ideas and share their thoughts.

The sixth component is Instruction Presentation. This includes presenting lessons and structuring activities. In the beginning stage, both teachers tend to provide separate lessons. In the compromising stage, the special education teacher starts to direct some. In the collaborating stage, both teachers present and provide instruction together.

The seventh component is Classroom Management. This includes the Structuring and relationships in the classroom routines, rules, and expectations. In the beginning stage, both teachers follow their basic roles and rules. In the compromising stage, they begin to develop new roles and rules. In the collaborating stage, they have formed a system.

The eighth component is Assessment. This includes evaluating the students individually. In the beginning stage, both teachers have their own forms of evaluations. In the compromising stage, they begin to explore other options for evaluating. In the collaborating stage, they begin to appreciate that using a variety of assessment tools is important. Not one type of assessment is all you need. Working with another teacher can provide more examples of ways to assess students.

The Gately's also provide two co-teaching rating scales that educators can use as a tool to identify strengths and weaknesses (see Appendix A & B).
When it comes to dealing with the eight stages of collaborative teaching relationships, it has to do a lot with the feelings of the teachers. M. Kelly (2006), the author of *The Co-Teach Model*, believed that the regular education and special education teachers have their own roles in dealing with the feelings expressed in these stages. These roles reflect experiences that are similar to stages that the Gately’s discussed. Kelly provided a list of roles that both teachers should follow when dealing with the collaborative teaching relationship.

Regular Education Teacher Relationship Roles:

1. open communication lines early
2. realize many co-teachers feel just as uncomfortable or feel invaded
3. don't assume co-teacher want to take over
4. don't assume co-teacher is judging
5. share beliefs and expectations
6. ask co-teacher expectation of you
7. don't treat co-teach like an aid

Special Education Teacher Relationship Roles:

1. open communication lines early
2. realize regular education teacher feels ownership
3. explain any absences
4. discuss student modifications and have them help
5. do not change grading scale
6. share beliefs and expectations
7. ask co-teacher expectation of you
Both Educators Relationship Roles:

1. in the same boat
2. be professional
3. get along

(Kelly, 2006, p. 1)

The Collaborative Teaching Classroom

The Learning Disabilities Association (LDA) of Iowa has an annual conference in Des Moines, Iowa. In 2006, the focus was mainly on co-teaching. Marilyn Friend, Ph. D. presented at the LDA conference. Friend works at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the Department of Specialized Education Services. She feels that she knows how to help make co-teaching successful through setting it up and addressing its challenges.

According to Friend (2006), when entering a classroom that includes collaborative teaching, an observer should see committed teachers that believe that their two viewpoints make a better learning environment with endless possibilities for their students. They should see different instructional practices and approaches. They should see flexible and forgiving teachers and professionals with developed skills in the curricular areas. They should hear “we” and see teachers sharing decisions based on instruction and student needs, while dividing tasks. They should see educators that plan efficiently and that recognize importance of the service they are delivering. When entering a collaborative teaching classroom, it should be difficult to tell which teacher is the general educator or the special educator. The students will view each teacher as equal.
Finding Time to Collaborate

According to Marilyn Friend (2006), at her Learning Disabilities Association presentation, collaborating time is one of the main concerns of co-teachers. It is difficult to find time to meet and to use it efficiently. It is important that co-teachers are able to have planning time to collaborate appropriately. In order to do this, Friend (2006), believes co-teachers should:

1. use other teachers to cover their classroom
2. have substitutes
3. find “volunteer” substitutes
4. begin class with individual work time
5. use educational videos
6. have professional developments times for collaboration
7. meet during early dismissal days
8. stay late once a month
9. look at it as a school committee meeting
10. divide instructional labor
11. reserve time in daily schedule

(Friend, 2006)

When you find time for collaboration, it helps to follow three phases: prepare an outline of upcoming instruction, decide together how to arrange classroom and roles, and have the special education teacher make the accommodations for the students with special needs. Co-teachers should keep in mind that this may take years to actually work out, in order to prioritize the scheduling based on student needs.
Issues Related to Co-Teaching

According to Friend (2006), many factors that cause issues with co-teaching are actually small. Through out time these small issues can become very large if not taken care of. Some of these factors include: being late, not informing each other of schedule changes, decrease or increase of classroom structure, use of substitutes for one of the teachers, one teacher getting pulled out of the room, lack of adjustments that are needed, parental concerns, and not communicating concerns. Most of all, the ten factors that hurt the collaborative teaching process the most are:

1. not sharing
2. using co-teaching for all inclusive services
3. not having clear roles
4. co-teaching to please staff
5. not developing skills
6. not using different options
7. not increasing instruction
8. not arranging planning time
9. too many students with special needs in one room
10. not gathering on-going data.

(Friend, 2006)

Current Research

According to Lawton (1999), research has been focusing more on process not effect on achievement. Stout (2001), believed that since there is a lack of comprehensive or national data for the effectiveness of co-teaching, it remains controversial. According
to Austin (2001), there is a definite need for further research on co-teaching curricula, school administration support, improvements in practice, and its effectiveness.

Stout (2001) added that many studies have been done to show that students in integrated classrooms tend to score higher than students in segregated classrooms. One study showed that integrated students scored in the 80th percentile, while the segregated students scored in the 50th percentile. Another study shows that this continues into post-high school with 73% of integrated students becoming employed compared to only 53% of segregated.

Some studies show a small to moderate beneficial effect from inclusion. Co-teaching (2006) valued co-teaching because the writers believe it brings together the expertise, knowledge, and skill of both professionals. This allows the students to learn from two rather than one. Direct correlation has been found between co-teaching and student achievement.

Although not much research has been done on student perspectives, Stout (2001) for many students, co-teaching helps reduce their fear of diversity and helps them understand their friendships. It increases their comfort level, social cognition, and self-concept. Co-teaching gives students WITH special needs the chance to develop their abilities and become advocates for themselves. According to Marston (2006) students will feel more comfortable and motivated. Their misunderstandings of content decreases. Co-teaching (2006) said that co-teaching increases enthusiasm, involvement, individual instruction, help for students, and provides a variety of learning styles. According to Checkley (2003) the students "benefit most" because they "enjoy access to more adults" and they gain a teacher in the classroom. According to Lawton (1999), students benefit
from a special education teacher in the classroom by receiving more curriculum, identification of learning problems, and by receiving a variety of teaching/learning styles. Austin (2001), also believed that this helps promote social tolerance and acceptance.

In *Teachers' Beliefs About Co-Teaching* (2001), Lance Austin specifically focuses on the perceptions of the collaborating teachers. In his study, he begins with surveys and interviews to find out what collaborating teachers think about this trend. He found two significant things: (1) general education teachers felt as if they did more, and (2) special education teachers felt as if they were not as valued. Although this study also contains other determining factors, these responses were most common of the general and special education teachers. Most co-teachers find co-teaching to be effective academically and socially beneficial.

According to Austin (2001), the educators also provided recommendations that highlight the importance of certain steps when it comes to collaboration. Most of them felt that collaborative teachers need to provide feedback to their partners, share management and planning time, use relevant curricula and learning techniques, and to have support from the administration.

Friend (2000) believed it is difficult for teachers to keep track of each room, there is a lack of professional development preparation and learning experiences for strategies, and classroom observations.

Co-teachers do benefit from working together, but according to Daniel J. Boudah, an assistant professor of educational psychology of Texas A&M University of College Station, each teacher must volunteer (Lawton, 1999). *Co-teaching* (2006) said that shared responsibilities result in:
1. fewer teachers getting burned out
2. reduction of discipline problems
3. more excitement and creativity
4. more grouping options.

This does not necessarily mean full inclusion. It is an environment that combines consultation, resource (pull-out), and co-teaching. It gives them support that is personal and professional. Pull-out still may be a better choice for some students. According to Alan Gartner, a University of New York professor, a general classroom should only contain 10% or less of students with mild to moderate disabilities (Lawton, 1999).

In, *A Collaborative Effort to Enhance Reading and Writing Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms*, S. Vaughn, M.T. Hughes, J.S. Schumm, and J. Kingner (1998) pointed out the strong effects that co-teaching can have on reading and writing.

James Kauffman of the University of Virginia believes that inclusion exists to save money and that this is unrealistic. Some educators believe that "good" teachers can meet the needs of all (Stout, 2001).

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

As a special education teacher, I have learned and researched many different styles of teaching. I want to be educated on the latest teaching studies and trends to keep my instruction up-to-date and fresh for my students. After researching the implementation of collaborative teaching, I better understand how it all comes together. Although collaborative teaching is time consuming and not an easy task, it can be done successfully. I think that more districts need to adopt this approach. It is a great support for the No Child Left Behind Act and it supports the IDEA laws.
When implementing co-teaching, keep in mind that it is important to follow these steps:

1. establish rapport
2. identify teaching styles
3. discuss strengths and weaknesses
4. discuss Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
5. form a plan of action
6. take risks and grow

(Marston, 2006).

Using these steps as a foundation for the implementation of collaborative teaching, is a great way to help create a smooth path. More teachers will feel comfortable and want to get involved with this approach if they can see how simple it really can be. Collaborative teaching should not be scary. As educators, our job is to do what is best for our students. Collaborative teaching heads us in that direction.
References


Appendix A: The Co-teaching Rating Scale for Special Education Teachers

Special Education Teacher Format

Respond to each question below by circling the number that best describes your viewpoint:

1: Rarely  2: Sometimes  3: Usually

1. I can easily read the nonverbal cues of my co-teaching partner.

2. I feel comfortable moving freely about the space in the co-taught classroom.

3. I understand the curriculum standards with respect to the content area in the co-taught classroom.

4. Both teachers in the co-taught classroom agree on the goals of the co-taught classroom.

5. Planning can be spontaneous, with changes occurring during the instructional lesson.

6. I often present lessons in the co-taught class.

7. Classroom rules and routines have been jointly developed.

8. Many measures are used for grading students.

9. Humor is often used in the classroom.

10. All materials are shared in the classroom.

11. I am familiar with the methods and materials with respect to this content area.

12. Modifications of goals for students with special needs are incorporated into this class.
13. Planning for classes is the shared responsibility of both teachers.

14. The "chalk" passes freely between the two teachers.

15. A variety of classroom management techniques is sued to enhance learning of all students.

16. Test modifications are commonplace.

17. Communication is open and honest.

18. There is fluid positioning of teachers in the classroom.

19. I feel confident in my knowledge of the curriculum content.

20. Student-centered objectives are incorporated into the classroom content.

21. Time is allotted (or found) for common planning.

22. Students accept both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.

23. Behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers.

24. Goals and objectives in IEPs are considered as part of the grading for students with special needs.
Appendix B: The Co-teaching Rating Scale for General Education Teachers

General Education Teacher Format

Respond to each question below by circling the number that best describes your viewpoint:

1: Rarely  2: Sometimes  3: Usually

1. I can easily read the nonverbal cues of my co-teaching partner.

2. Both teachers move freely about the space in the co-taught classroom.

3. My co-teacher understands the curriculum standards with respect to the content area in the co-taught classroom.

4. Both teachers in the co-taught classroom agree on the goals of the co-taught classroom.

5. Planning can be spontaneous, with changes occurring during the instructional lesson.

6. My co-teaching partner often presents lessons in the co-taught class.

7. Classroom rules and routine have been jointly developed.

8. Many measures are used for grading students.

9. Humor is often used in the classroom.

10. All materials are shared in the classroom.

11. The special educator is familiar with themes and materials with respect to the content areas.

12. Modifications of goals for students with special needs are fully incorporated into this class.
13. Planning for classes is the shared responsibility of both teachers.

14. The "chalk" passes freely between the two teachers.

15. A variety of classroom management techniques is used to enhance learning of all students.

16. Test modifications are commonplace.

17. Communication is open and honest.

18. There is fluid positioning of teachers in the classroom.

19. I am confident of the special educator's knowledge of the curriculum content.

20. Student-centered objectives are incorporated into the classroom curriculum.

21. Time is allotted (or found) for common planning.

22. Students accept both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.

23. Behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers.

24. Goals and objectives in IEPs are considered as part of the grading for students with special needs.